

Remarks

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Prior to the entry of this Response, claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16 were pending in this application. Upon entry of this Response, claims 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 11, 12 and 14-16 will be pending.

In the Office Action mailed September 10, 2001, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting in view of claims 1-20 of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,465, assigned to the Assignee of the present application, and in view of claims 1-16 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 09/470,365, now U.S. Patent No. 6,285,945, also assigned to the Assignee of the present application. In response, Terminal Disclaimers are filed herewith to overcome the Examiner's obviousness-type double patenting rejections.

In the September 10, 2001 Office Action, the Examiner also rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S.P.N. 5,835,878 to Saito et al. ("the Saito '878 patent"). The Examiner also rejected claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S.P.N. 6,178,370 to Zierolf ("the Zierolf '370 patent"). In response, the Applicants have canceled claims 5 and 13 without prejudice, and have amended independent claims 1 and 9 to include all of the limitations thereof. The Applicants have also amended certain claim dependencies in light of the above amendments, as well as certain claim informalities noted by the Examiner.

As a result, the Applicants believe that claims 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 11, 12 and 14-16 now meet both the formal and substantive requirements for patentability, and that the application is in proper condition for allowance. Accordingly, such action by the Examiner is respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would expedite allowance or resolve any additional questions, such a call is invited at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: November 7, 2001

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